

# FACT SHEET

## CONSUMER INFORMATION

### 4 HOME ECONOMICS—FAMILY LIVING NO. 16—1970 MYRA ZABEL

## Buying Rugs and Carpets

Confused by the many terms, prices and types of rugs and carpets on the market today? So are a lot of other people.

One of the big problems is the abundance of fibers, textures, colors, and patterns from which to choose. And, if none of this suits you, several companies will design, match colors, and construct carpet to any size or shape—custom-tailored for your home. This will cost a little more, of course.

The selection of a rug or carpet occupies a special place in decorating the home. Because it represents a major expenditure for many families, it is important to plan wisely for this purchase. Before you start to shop seriously, consider how long you want the carpeting or rug to last in relation to the kind of room, the amount of traffic, and the length of time you expect to stay where you live. Now that you have made THAT decision, build up a background of facts to help you evaluate what you see, what you hear, and come up with the carpet that is the best buy for you.

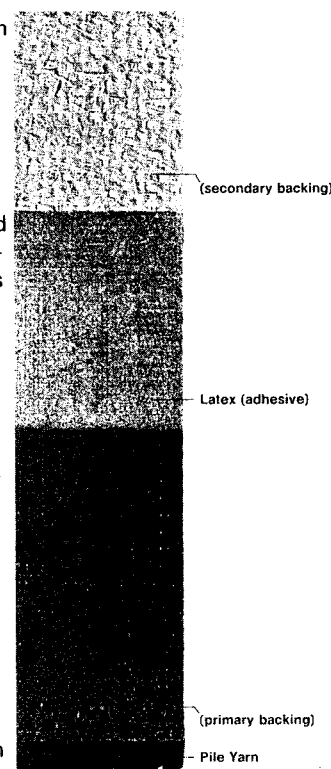
Four components in the make-up of carpet—the backing materials (primary and secondary), the adhesive and the face pile—all have a part in wearability. Your best ally when shopping for carpet and rugs is knowledge of the relationship of these to each other.

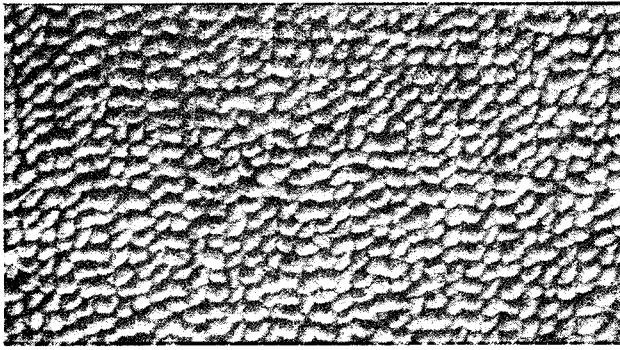
The actual method of construction is not a factor in carpet durability. About 90 percent of the carpet available is made on large tufting machines. Both burlap and polypropylene are used for primary and secondary backing and both are good. Whatever method is used, the purpose of the backing is to hold the face pile firmly in place and to keep the carpet from shrinking or stretching excessively. Most tufted carpet has a second backing placed over the primary backing to help give body for easier installation and to further protect against shrinking and stretching. Where a secondary backing is used, it is put on after the carpet is constructed; therefore, you do not see rows of tufts from the back of the carpet. Woven carpet generally does not have a secondary backing. Latex foam, which really is the rug pad, is sometimes put onto the carpet backing, and is easy to install if you are laying the carpet yourself.

In carpeting of today, the surface pile gives you clues to a carpet's wearability and appearance retention. Fiber, yarn, color, and texture make up the surface pile. Don't get upset if you hear a different carpet story in each place you shop. There are many many comparable qualities of carpet available and it is true that most carpet stores and departments handle top qualities along with medium and light qualities. After all,

would you buy anything from establishments that DO NOT believe in the merchandise they handle? Here are your allies for evaluating what you see and hear. Know the five major fibers—acrylic, nylon, polyester, polypropylene, and wool—that are used in carpeting. All are good carpet fibers and all give satisfactory wear. How the fiber is handled in the yarn and how much is used are the attributes affecting durability. A thin, sleazy pile will not hold up under hard, prolonged wear, regardless of the fiber. As pile compactness increases, wear life will increase (and so will price). Texture also contributes to wearability. For heavy traffic areas, carpet with a short, very dense pile gives good results and is easiest to maintain. The textures that combine some high and some low tufts, either cut or uncut, generally give good wear. The pile of a shag cannot be as compact as regular carpet because of the texture effect desired. Color also can affect wear and appearance retention. A variation in dark-light, as in a tweed, will show soiling less than an all light or all dark color.

There are many places to shop for rugs and carpets. You may find them in carpet specialty stores, department stores, variety stores, discount stores, supermarkets, mail order houses, second hand shops, Good Will, Salvation Army, and even in a few service stations. If you are short on cash and long on time it would be fun to try them all. Specialty shops and department stores usually carry medium grade to top of the line carpeting—quality, style, and price. They also handle installation and any problems of faulty construction or other dissatisfactions. Mail order houses handle carpeting in the low-medium to better quality ranges but seldom offer top of the line products, while discount houses offer promotional goods to medium qualities. Places handling used rugs and carpets will vary widely in what they offer and when it is available, depending on who is selling out next.





Carpet with low, tight loops

Carpet prices vary as much as carpet style and quality, making it possible for most families to own at least one. Expect to pay \$8.00 or more per square yard (plus pad, plus installation) for medium or better grade carpet. Top line carpet will run \$18.00 to \$35.00 per square yard; and, if you insist on paying \$50.00, you can do that too! Promotional goods can be found starting at about \$2.50 per square yard, and prices for used rugs and carpet will vary according to percentage of wear life left.

The five principal carpet fibers will be found to some extent in all price ranges. Generally, you can expect to find wool in medium to top line carpets; acrylic in medium to top line; nylon in promotional to better ranges; polyester in medium prices; and polypropylene in promotional to medium prices.

A young couple, working on higher education and with little money to spare might spark up an apartment with promotional carpet or a rug at about \$3.00 per square yard and expect it to see them through school. The same carpet might serve in a seldom-used bedroom for 15 years. Or they may wish to use carpet tiles (which they can lay themselves).

A family with children in grade and high school would possibly want medium to better quality carpet for a much-used family room.

If you like new carpet every few years, then stay within the low medium range, but if your family decides to settle the floor question for the next 15 to 20 years, go for better to top qualities in the heavy traffic areas.

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